



**NATIONAL
FARMERS
UNION**

April 19, 2000

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Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
Room 1061
5630 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20852

RE: Response to Petition to Recognize Filtered Milk as a Form of Milk
Under the Standards of Identity for Cheese and Cheese Products

Dear Dockets Management Branch Administrator:

We are writing on behalf of the 300,000 members of the National Farmers Union to express our opposition to changing the definition of milk under 21 C.F.R. Sec. 133.3. The citizen petition filed with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration by the American Dairy Products Institute proposes changing the standard to allow the use of liquid ultra-filtered milk in cheese-making. The citizen petition filed on behalf of the National Cheese Institute, the Grocery Manufacturers of America, Inc., and the National Food Processors Association on Feb. 10, 2000, seeks to change the standard to allow the use of liquid and dry ultra-filtered milk in cheese-making.

We are vehemently opposed to allowing ultra-filtered milk, in the liquid or dry form, to being used as an ingredient in natural cheese and cheese products. The change would seriously compromise decades of work by the nation's dairy farmers.

We object to the citizen petitions for the following reasons:

1. As defined in Sec. 133.3, *milk means the lacteal secretion, practically free from colostrum, obtained by the complete milking of one or more healthy cows*. The definition includes *concentrated milk, reconstituted milk, and dry whole milk*. The processes of filtering and drying the milk changes the basic composition of the milk by removing lactose and minerals. We cannot allow one of the most wholesome and basic foods to be adulterated.
2. Using a cheese ingredient that is produced outside of the United States--dry or liquid ultra-filtered (UF) milk--will subject dairy products to increased vulnerability to contamination and compromise the sanitation, hydrosanitary and phytosanitary standards that the U.S. has worked to develop.
3. UF milk in the dried form is not produced in the United States and neither dried or liquid UF milk is subject to the import quotas that regulate dairy product access to the U.S. market. Changing the product standards would result in UF milk displacing domestically-produced milk used for cheese production, a decrease in the prices paid to dairy farmers, and increased costs to the U.S. dairy program for purchases and inventory of dairy products.

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4. U.S. dairy farmers have developed an identity for milk and dairy products as pure and wholesome in the eye of their ultimate user – the American consumer. The change of definition will allow the use of ultra-filtered (UF) milk, in liquid and dry forms, to be used in the manufacture of cheese and cheese products. Products made with UF milk should be labeled “imitation”. Changing the product standard would be misleading to the consumer.

We urge you to deny both petitions.

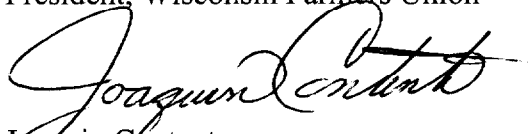
Sincerely yours,



Leland Swenson
President, National Farmers Union



Bill Brey
President, Wisconsin Farmers Union



Joaquin Contente
President, California Farmers Union



David Frederickson
President, Minnesota Farmers Union



Robert Junk
President, Pennsylvania Farmers Union



Charlie Nash
President, Ohio Farmers Union

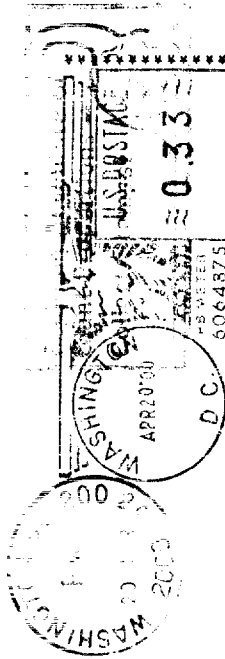


Wes Sims
President, Texas Farmers Union



**NATIONAL
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UNION**

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Washington, DC 20001



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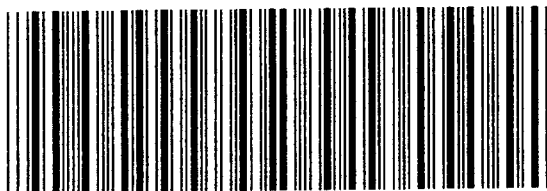
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